

EXHIBIT 13

27 articles that mention "matthew farwell"



Sandra Birchmore's alleged killer charged with causing death of her unborn child

BY LANCE REYNOLDS

October 30, 2025 at 1:40 p.m.

The Stoughton police officer accused of grooming, impregnating and then killing Canton woman Sandra Birchmore...



Stoughton cop accused of killing Sandra Birchmore adds death penalty specialist to defense team

BY FLINT MCCOLGAN

June 26, 2025 at 6:16 p.m.

The federal case against a Stoughton cop accused of grooming, impregnating and then killing a...



Hearing for accused Sandra Birchmore killer delayed due to 'voluminous' evidence

BY FLINT MCCOLGAN

October 15, 2024 at 6:28 p.m.

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Editorial: Speak loudly for the unborn

BY BOSTON HERALD EDITORIAL STAFF

September 18, 2024 at 5:57 a.m.

The simplicity of the language is the beauty of this act. This passage alone says...



Should Sandra Birchmore's alleged murderer also be charged with killing her unborn baby?

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September 16, 2024 at 9:08 a.m.

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Ex-cop charged with killing pregnant woman drops detention hearing

BY GRACE ZOKOVITCH

September 9, 2024 at 5:51 p.m.

The former Stoughton cop who allegedly sexually exploited a teenage volunteer at the department for...



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BY LANCE REYNOLDS

September 6, 2024 at 6:36 p.m.

Gov. Maura Healey, appearing on WGBH Friday, vowed that she wants justice done for Sandra...



'Grisly': How a Stoughton cop groomed his alleged murder victim Sandra Birchmore

BY FLINT MCCOLGAN

September 3, 2024 at 2:26 p.m.

The depths of the "grisly" details on how a former Stoughton cop allegedly groomed, raped,...



Howie Carr: Corruption in Canton murderous

BY HOWIE CARR

August 29, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.

The parallels between the two crimes are amazing. Birchmore was murdered on Feb. 1, 2021,...



'DEPRAVED': FBI arrests ex-Stoughton Police officer for alleged murder of pregnant rape victim

BY FLINT MCCOLGAN

September 13, 2024 at 1:38 p.m.

A "depraved" former Stoughton cop could face the death penalty for the alleged murder of...

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'DEPRAVED': FBI arrests ex-Stoughton Police officer for alleged murder of pregnant rape victim

'A gross betrayal of his sworn oath'



Stoughton Police Chief Donna McNamara speaks to the media in front of the Federal Courthouse after the arrest of former Stoughton Police officer Matthew Farwell, charged with the alleged murder of Sandra Birchmore, who is pictured on the banner in the background. (Photo By Matt Stone/Boston Herald)

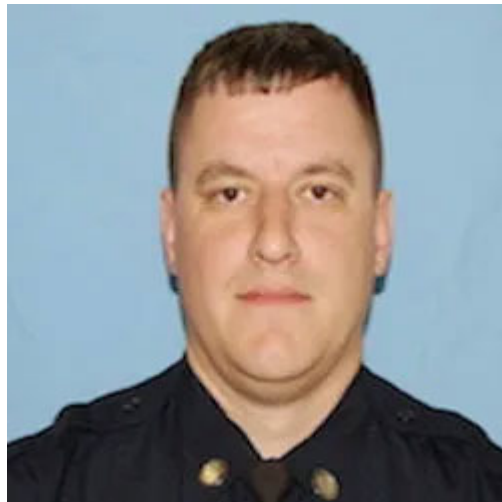


By **FLINT MCCOLGAN** | flint.mccolgan@bostonherald.com, **TODD PRUSSMAN** | todd.prussman@bostonherald.com | Boston Herald and **RICK SOBEY** | rick.sobey@bostonherald.com | Boston Herald

A “depraved” former Stoughton cop could face the death penalty for the alleged murder of a girl federal prosecutors say he started raping when she was just 15 and then killed after she became pregnant with his child.

An FBI SWAT team arrested former Stoughton Police Detective Matthew Farwell Wednesday morning after he was indicted for allegedly slaying Sandra Birchmore, 23, of Canton. Authorities unsealed court records detailing his alleged years-long rape and abuse of Birchmore.

Farwell appeared in federal court in Boston, clad in a black T-shirt and jeans, at around 2:30 p.m. where he pleaded not guilty to the charges. U.S. District Court Magistrate Judge M. Page Kelly turned him over to the U.S. Marshals ahead of a full detention hearing scheduled for Sept. 10.



Stoughton Police Department via AP
Matthew Farwell (Stoughton Police Department via AP)

Groomed and ‘rape’

“What we believe Officer Matthew Falwell did as outlined in today’s indictment is depraved and a gross betrayal of his sworn oath and the public’s trust,” said Stephen Kelleher, Assistant Special Agent in Charge of the Boston FBI field office during a midday press conference announcing Farwell’s arrest.

“Let me be clear, Matthew Falwell’s gun and badge did not grant him authority to violate the Constitution and certainly didn’t entitle him to sexually exploit, abuse, and rape a child before killing her and her unborn baby in an attempt to cover up his alleged crime,” he added.

Prosecutors say that Farwell, 38, of North Easton, on Feb. 1, 2021, entered Birchmore’s Canton apartment and strangled her to death as he knew she was weeks pregnant with his child. He then staged the apartment to make it look like Birchmore had committed suicide.

Birchmore, of Canton, was born in 1997 and in March 2010, at the age of 12, she applied to be a participant in the Police Explorers Academy, a youth program run by the SPD for which Farwell taught. She stayed in the program for about four years.

Court documents allege that Farwell worked to groom Birchmore early on, pretending to befriend the girl 12 years his junior by doing test prep with her at the library and friending her on Facebook. He began a sexual relationship with her when she was 15 and he was 27, taking her virginity, something he seems to be quite proud of based on messages uncovered during the lengthy federal investigation.

“It was such a big day,” Farwell said in a 2020 text to Birchmore. FBI agents were able to capture the texting and messaging from Birchmore’s iPhone, Apple Watch and computer.

The messages also include requests from Farwell to pretend she was as young as only 13 and to say he was raping her as they had sex.

In December 2020, following seven years of sex between the pair during which Farwell had gotten married and fathered children with his wife, Birchmore told Farwell that she wanted a child of her own, according to court docs. They reached a deal, prosecutors say: “He would try to impregnate Birchmore in exchange for her silence about his criminal conduct (i.e. child sexual abuse) and years-long extramarital affair.”

Birchmore learned she was pregnant in late December 2020, about a month before she would die.

“Ms. Birchmore was very excited about becoming a mother: buying baby clothes and other items, taking precautions to ensure the health of her new child,” acting U.S. Attorney Joshua Levy said. “Sandra Birchmore had many good friends. She had a good job. She had dreams of becoming a nurse and she had a child on the way, but Mr. Farwell did not share in that excitement.

“Mr. Farwell was losing control in late 2020, early 2021, and the information that Sandra Birchmore possessed about his illegal conduct was in danger of slipping out,” Levy continued.

Levy said the 6-foot-4 Farwell would get “visibly angry” at the situation and began physically abusing the 4-foot-10 Birchmore by pushing and shoving her and even put the pregnant young woman “in a choke hold.”

Birchmore composed a message to Farwell’s wife disclosing the relationship — which doesn’t seem to have ever been sent — and a friend of hers called the Stoughton Police to report the crimes, according to court documents. Prosecutors say an unknown department employee tipped Farwell off to this. He became mad and murdered her, prosecutors say.

The death was ruled by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner to be a suicide, but prosecutors have retained their own expert, Levy said, who disagrees.

‘Horrific injustice’

Farwell served in the U.S. Army from 2004 to 2008. He was sworn as a police officer for the Town of Wellesley in 2008 and served until 2012 when he became a Stoughton police officer.

“The alleged murder of Sandra is a horrific injustice,” said Stoughton Police Chief Donna McNamara in a statement. “The allegations against the suspect ... represent the single worst act of not just professional misconduct but indeed human indecency that I have observed in a nearly three-decade career in law enforcement.”

McNamara said in April 2022 that the department first heard of the allegations in February 2021 and placed Farwell on administrative leave as it launched an internal affairs investigation. Farwell submitted his resignation that April.

McNamara reiterated the internal investigation again Wednesday, adding, “the instructions of which made it clear that no stone should be left unturned.”

Farwell was decertified as a police officer by the state’s POST Commission earlier this year.

Fallout

Levy faced multiple questions about whether or not any other officers or individuals would be charged in connection with Birchmore’s death.

The federal prosecutor dodged the inquiries, but said the case remains under investigation. He added that investigative information would be shared with state law enforcement to see if there will be further charges.

2024 > August > 28

OPINION > OPINION COLUMNISTS

Howie Carr: Corruption in Canton murderous



Matt Stone/Boston Herald

U.S. Attorney, Joshua Levy (Matt Stone/Boston Herald)



By **HOWIE CARR** | howard.carr@medianewsgroup.com | Boston

Herald

PUBLISHED: August 28, 2024 at 6:23 PM EDT | UPDATED: August 29, 2024 at 9:00 AM EDT

As scandalous as the Karen Read frame-up is, the [Sandra Birchmore case](#) may be even more horrific, and not just because both murders occurred in the same corrupt town, featuring largely the same cast of bumbling, corrupt cops.

The parallels between the two crimes are amazing. Birchmore was murdered on Feb. 1, 2021, in Canton, just as a blizzard arrived. John O’Keefe was killed in Canton on Jan. 29, 2022, almost exactly one year later... as a blizzard approached.

And the cops’ reaction was almost identical.

Look the other way. Just blame the woman, the female victim.

Remember Michael Proctor, the drunkard state cop now suspended without pay, who after lugging Karen Read texted his sister about what he hoped the babe with the weird Fall River accent and no ass would do:

“Hopefully she kills himself.”

Now we discover in paragraph 50 of the FBI affidavit that shortly before she was murdered, Birchmore had it out with the father of her unborn child, married Stoughton police officer Matthew Farwell.

After the fight, according to the G-men, she told “Person 2” what Farwell told her about their pregnancy:

“He wished (she) would just die and he wants nothing to do with the baby.”

The state medical examiner ruled Birchmore’s death a “suicide.” Wink wink nudge nudge.

Then when John O’Keefe’s badly beaten body was found on the lawn of another Boston police officer, the state medical examiner ruled a cause of death “could not be determined.”

Forget it Jake, it’s Canton.

In the Karen Read case, Trooper Proctor never even bothered to go inside the cop's house where the body had been found in the front yard. Now we find out that members of that same state police unit interviewed Matthew Farwell... in the parking lot of a school in Stoughton.

Even Barney Fife would be embarrassed by how lame these flatfeet are.

In their initial 2021 investigation, DA Morrissey's state Keystone Kops could find no text messages between Farwell and Birchmore. There were only 32,709. Farwell told cops he'd deleted everything, much like the two cops named Brian in the Karen Read case who actually destroyed their cell phones rather than turn them over to the court.

In the Karen Read investigation, that same state cop who couldn't find even one of those 32,709 text messages likewise never discovered Jennifer McCabe's deleted Google search – "Hos long to die in cold."

That question was texted out at 2:27 a.m. as Boston cop John O'Keefe lay dying in the snow outside her friend Brian Albert's house.

That state cop who bungled both searches is Nicholas Guarino. He's from Norwood, which abuts Canton on the west, just like Stoughton does to the south. Such a tiny area, so many unsolved murders during blizzards with heavy police vibes....

Bottom line here is that DA Meatball Morrissey's crack sleuths leave no stone unturned, except the ones the perps are hiding under.

And except for Trooper Proctor, all these bent badges kept getting paid. His drunken buddy on the Canton PD, Kevin "Fat" Albert" is suspended, with pay. Farwell allegedly strangled Sandra in February, was placed on "paid administrative leave" three weeks later and continued on paid vacation until May 2022.

Whoever said crime doesn't pay has never been a cop in Norfolk County.

You have to wonder, how many other victims are stepping forward now that the first of the Canton Cover-ups has been broken up? When cops use the word "grooming," as they did at yesterday's press conference at the federal courthouse, they're seldom talking about one case.

Another question: where are all the trolls who mindlessly cheerlead on social media for the unspeakably corrupt cops in Norfolk County?

They said the feds' investigation was over.

They said the grand jury's term had expired.

They said pay no attention to the evidence in either the Read or Birchmore case, nothing to see here folks, move along.

Once again, the crooked cops are hoisted not on their own petards but on their own text messages. In the federal documents, Farwell admits to statutory rape of Birchmore when she was 15.

Didn't he ever hear the old schoolboy warning, "15'll get you 20." Guess what, or maybe the rules are different in Norfolk County, at least if you're a crooked cop.

This Birchmore case also has echoes of the priest scandal in the Archdiocese of Boston. Those pederast padres went after little boys from broken homes, no father in sight. Ditto Sandra Birchmore, raised by her mother who died at age 52.

How evil was Farwell? According to the text put into public record by the feds, right before he allegedly murdered his pregnant girlfriend, he stopped by her apartment in Canton. She texted a friend:

"He asked me if I'd give him a key and said that if I keep it a secret he'd be around... Then he looked in my closet and then the bathroom but why, haven't figured that out."

By the way, the night Farwell came by to get the key in secret, he brought over a treat for the woman he was allegedly getting ready to slaughter, along with his own unborn child: some ginger ale.

Ginger ale! Another, smaller link between the two cases. Brian Higgins, the grossly obese ATF cop in the middle of the Karen Read case, bragged about his drink of choice being a "Jameson and gingah."

Never accept ginger ale from a cop, at least in Norfolk County.

Josh Levy, the acting U.S. attorney, said something at his press conference that must be more than somewhat concerning to certain parties in Greater Canton:

"When someone comes to us with information that a police officer may have been involved in a murder, we're going to get involved."

As for Karen Read, you can understand why she's trying to get as far away from Canton as possible. Karen, if any local yokel cops ask you to give them the key to your house, so they can... check up on you... run, don't walk.

Hos long would it have taken them to string Karen Read up, just like they did to Sandra Birchmore?

(Pre-order Howie's new book "You Understand American?" at howiecarrshow.com.)

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NEWS > CRIME & PUBLIC SAFETY

‘Grisly’: How a Stoughton cop groomed his alleged murder victim Sandra Birchmore

Rape, pregnancy and a federal indictment





By **FLINT MCCOLGAN** | flint.mccolgan@bostonherald.com

PUBLISHED: September 1, 2024 at 5:48 AM EDT | UPDATED: September 3, 2024 at 2:26 PM EDT

The “grisly” details on how a former Stoughton cop allegedly groomed, raped, impregnated and then killed a young woman he first met when she was 12 years old are darker than prosecutors could possibly describe in a press conference announcing his arrest.

Matthew Farwell, 38, of North Easton, was a police officer for roughly 15 years — first for the department in Wellesley in 2008 and then for Stoughton four years later — before he resigned in April 2022 amid allegations that Stoughton Police Chief Donna McNamara described Thursday as “the single worst act of not just professional misconduct but indeed human indecency that I have observed in a nearly three-decade career in law enforcement.”

The allegations

“On February 1, 2021, Farwell killed ... a young pregnant woman, whom he had spent years sexually exploiting,” prosecutors wrote in a filing. “Farwell’s grisly crime was designed to conceal forever the truth about his years of criminal conduct.”

His alleged victim was Sandra Birchmore, who as a 12-year-old had an interest in possibly becoming a cop and signed up for the Police Explorers Academy, a youth program run by the SPD for which Farwell taught, in March 2010 to learn more and get some mentorship.

As law enforcement filings allege, it wouldn’t take long for the then-26-year-old Farwell to make his move on the young girl. By April 2013, he was regularly scheduling sex dates with the 15-year-old. As he would say in a text later, it was a “a big thing to get to be the first” and take her virginity as a full-grown man 12 years her senior.

Meeting

The Stoughton PD once had a photo of a beaming, preteen Birchmore standing between two officers and proudly wearing her black t-shirt with a badge decal and “Explorer” written under it.

Farwell started slow, sending the young girl — barely chest height to the officers seen in that photo — a Facebook friend request on Oct. 28, 2012.

Soon, witnesses and relatives would tell investigators, Farwell “cultivated a close relationship with Birchmore when she was a child.”

The 6-foot-4 Farwell, a sworn police officer and a supposed mentor, would take the high school freshman to study and “test prep” at the local library — where, later, he would text her he first developed sexual urges for her, investigators say.

Skiping prom for statutory rape

Birchmore would recall in a text to Farwell that she “had butterflies so bad the day you took my virginity” on April 10, 2013. “Best day of my life.” She could even recall “the specific class and seat that she was in when she realized that she was going to lose her virginity to Farwell,” an affidavit states.

“What would you have done if we never used a condom and I never pulled out...,” Farwell would text her as the pair “reminisced” about the first night he raped her.

Birchmore said she “wouldve (sic) still finished school” and that “I loved prom night! It was worth not going to prom.”

“How did you feel when I asked to make your dream come true?” Farwell wrote in a later conversation, adding that he wished he had started having sex with her a year earlier.

“Amazing!” Birchmore said.

An ultimatum

The feds don't prosecute "murder," which is a state-level crime, so instead Farwell is charged with killing a witness or victim. To back this up, they say Farwell killed Birchmore to silence her so she couldn't reveal his alleged crimes of having statutory sex with her and doing so while on the clock for the Stoughton PD — which means wire fraud.

The investigation summarized in a filing by Special Agent Chenee Castruita of the Boston FBI points to at least 25 times the pair had sex while Farwell was still on the clock. It could happen at any time in the evening, and practically anywhere: at "Birchmore's previous home in Stoughton, her more recent apartment in Canton, a Costco parking lot in Stoughton, and a Five Guys parking lot in Canton."

During the course of the alleged illicit relationship, Farwell had gotten married and had children. On Oct. 5, 2020, an unidentified person told Birchmore that Farwell's wife was pregnant with their third child. Eighteen of the 25 alleged encounters happened from that date on, but Birchmore had dreams of her future.

Electronic messages stemming from around that time "indicate that Birchmore presented Farwell with an ultimatum: that Farwell would have to try for having a baby with her and, in return, Birchmore wouldn't disclose their relationship, which she knew had been illegal when she was underage and illegal while he was on duty.

Farwell agreed but tried to wiggle out of it anyway, investigators say, saying that he understood it to be to try once, not until it worked. Birchmore disagreed. On Dec. 28, 2020, it worked: she sent Farwell a text message with a hand-drawn poster celebrating the milestone: "Congrats we are going to be parents! 2021."

"I literally have nothing to say right now how could you express that in text when I said I don't appreciate it," was Farwell's immediate response, according to the feds.

Roughly a month later, on Feb. 1, 2021, prosecutors say, Farwell went to Birchmore's apartment, strangled her to death and arranged the place to look like a suicide. She still had laundry in the wash and had just arranged for an infant photo shoot earlier that day.

Repercussions

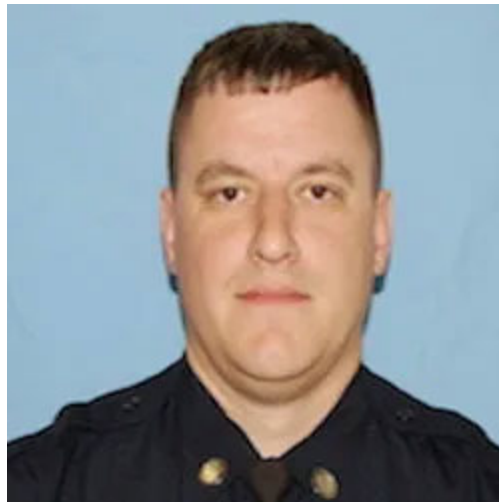
While prosecutors were mum on who else, if anybody, could be charged in this “ongoing investigation,” or if Farwell himself could face additional charges, others see it as the start of a whole takedown of police corruption.

“She wanted to be a police officer. She admired them. She looked up to them, the people who she looked up to the most, or the ones who took advantage of her; they violated her and they ultimately killed her and her unborn child,” Allison Taggart, one of a handful of women standing outside the federal courthouse on Thursday for Farwell’s arraignment. “It was blatantly obvious what happened here, and they should not have gotten away with it for as long as they did.”

Taggart and the others came to the Birchmore case by way of the Karen Read case, at whose hearings they have been regulars.

“There’s some of the same police officers. It’s the same DA’s office. There’s a lot of the same players involved in both cases, covering up for each other. It’s sick,” she said.

Jennifer O’Donnell, another protester, said “This is the beginning of some really great things happening for both Sandra Birchmore and Karen Read, and I’m sure many, sadly, other victims throughout the Commonwealth over the years.”



Stoughton Police Department via AP

Matthew Farwell (Stoughton Police Department via AP)

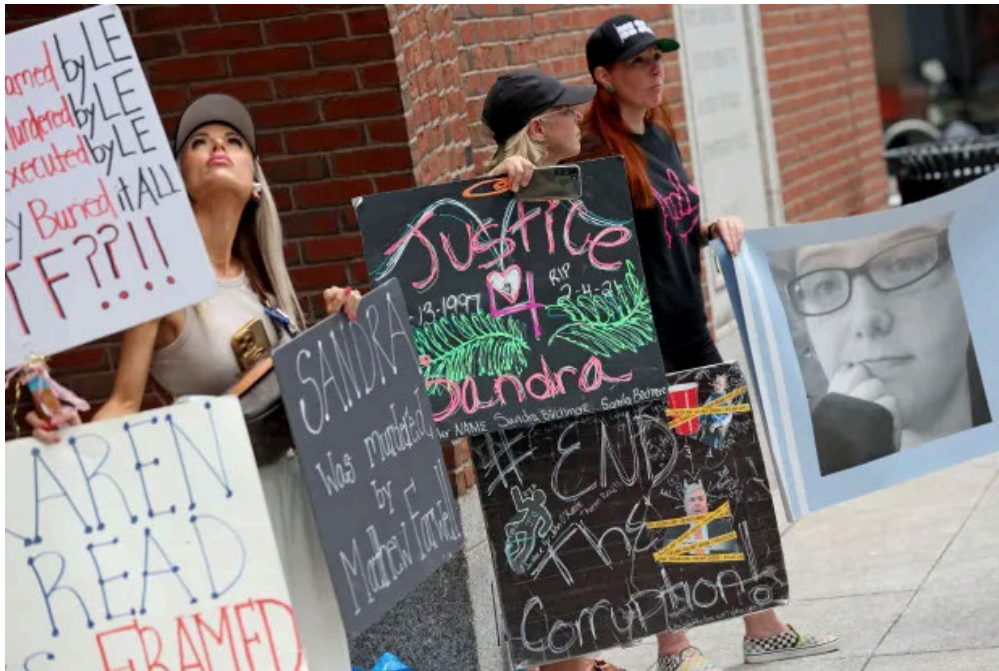


Photo By Matt Stone/Boston Herald

Allison Taggart, one of the plaintiffs in the buffer zone challenge, is seen at far right at another protest at the federal courthouse, this time in support of Canton resident Sandra Birchmore who the feds say was killed by then-Stoughton cop Matthew Farwell. (Photo By Matt Stone/Boston Herald)



Photo By Matt Stone/Boston Herald

Estey holds signs in front of the Federal Courthouse after the arrest of former Stoughton Police officer, Matthew Farwell charged in connection with the death of Sandra Birchmore. (Photo By Matt Stone/Boston Herald)

NEWS > LOCAL NEWS

Healey says she wants 'justice done for Sandra Birchmore'

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Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey steps away from the podium after taking questions from members of the media during a news conference, Monday, Sept. 16, 2019, in Boston.

Steven Senne / AP



By **Hannah Loss**

GBH 89.7

All Things Considered

Gov. Maura Healey said she was “horrificed” and “disgusted” when she learned of the alleged murder of Sandra Birchmore in 2021 by a former Stoughton police detective.

Matthew G. Farwell was **indicted last month** on a federal charge that he killed 23-year-old Birchmore after she claimed she was pregnant with his unborn baby. Farwell allegedly groomed and sexually exploited Birchmore when she was a teenager, then continued to have sex with her as an adult. The indictment alleges that Farwell used his police knowledge to stage Birchmore’s death so it would appear that she killed herself. Her death was originally ruled a suicide.

“Anything like that has got to be fully investigated and perpetrators have got to be held accountable,” Healey told *Boston Public Radio* on Friday.

The U.S. attorney’s office is investigating the case, and Healey said she expects the medical examiner’s office and other entities to cooperate. She said it’s essential to learn what happened in this case.

“I want justice done for Sandra Birchmore and for her family,” Healey said.

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Also on the topic of law and order, Healey addressed questions on whether the CEO of embattled Steward Healthcare, Ralph de la Torre, has committed crimes.

“What I’ve said is there needs to be accountability here. I’m glad he’s a subject of investigation right now. He should be held accountable. He should go to jail. And anybody else who worked along with him should pay the price,” she said.

De la Torre is still CEO of Steward, but Healey said the company is now controlled by the transformation committee in bankruptcy court.

“It’s out of Ralph de la Torre’s hands. And he’s got to be focused on lawyering up, because he is going to be investigated and prosecuted,” she said.

Healey’s comments differ from what Sen. Elizabeth Warren had previously told GBH News, saying that de la Torre should be removed from CEO because he still had influence. “He’s got access to all of the information. He’s the one negotiating the deals on which hospitals are closed,” Warren said [on Boston Public Radio on Thursday](#).

Healey said the state secured six “responsible, new operators” for Steward hospitals in Massachusetts, but were unable to find two more for Carney Hospital in Dorchester and Nashoba Valley Medical Center in Ayer.

“We did not have, unfortunately, any hospital willing to come in and help take over operations there,” Healey said. Those two hospitals are expected to close. However, doctor’s offices on those campuses remain open and there is 24/7 ambulance service with advanced care. Healey said they will evaluate the healthcare needs for Dorchester and Ayer to determine how best to provide care moving forward.



Hannah Loss X

Hannah Loss is an associate producer for GBH's Boston Public Radio.



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Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey wants justice for Sandra Birchmore, confident in incoming MSP leader



Courtesy

Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey says she wants justice done for Sandra Birchmore's family. (Courtesy)



By **LANCE REYNOLDS** | lreynolds@bostonherald.com

PUBLISHED: September 6, 2024 at 6:28 PM EDT | UPDATED: September 6, 2024 at 6:36 PM EDT

Ahead of a detention hearing against a “depraved” former Stoughton cop who allegedly murdered Sandra Birchmore and staged her apartment to make it appear she committed suicide, Gov. Maura Healey vowed that she wants justice done for the woman’s family.

Healey opened up about [former Stoughton Police Det. Matthew Farwell’s arrest](#) last week on WGBH’s “Ask the Governor” segment on Friday, saying she’s “glad that the U.S. Attorney’s Office is investigating” [Birchmore’s “grisly” death](#).

The governor also touched on her “every confidence” that the incoming colonel of the Massachusetts State Police, [Geoffrey Noble](#), will be able to shift the morale and chemistry of the embattled department.

An FBI SWAT team arrested Farwell, 38, of North Easton, at a Revere strip mall on Aug. 28 after he was indicted for allegedly slaying a 23-year-old Birchmore at her Canton apartment on Feb. 1, 2021.

A full detention hearing for Farwell is scheduled on Tuesday.

Farwell could face the death penalty for the alleged murder of a girl federal prosecutors say he started raping when she was just 15 and then killed after she became pregnant with his child.

Boston Public Radio co-host Margery Eagan put the governor on the spot when she highlighted how the state Office of the Chief Medical Examiner ruled Birchmore’s death as a suicide.

Eagan connected the case to the [Karen Read case](#) as the Norfolk County District Attorney’s Office investigated the deaths of Birchmore and John O’Keefe, Read’s Boston police officer boyfriend she is accused of backing her car into, leaving him to die in a snowstorm.

O’Keefe also died in Canton, days short of a full year after Birchmore’s death.

“The FBI apparently thinks this wasn’t a suicide,” Eagan said of Birchmore’s death. “It makes you a little nervous about what’s going on with the Canton Police, the Massachusetts Medical Examiner’s Office, and the Norfolk County investigators. Did the Medical Examiner get this wrong? How can we have confidence in these investigations in the heels especially of Karen Read and the State Police saying awful things about Karen Read, the defendant?”

Healey, the state's Attorney General at the time, responded, recounting how she felt "horrified and disgusted" by the allegations that were coming out about Farewell potentially being involved in Birchmore's death.

"Anything like that has got to be fully investigated," Healey said, "and perpetrators have to be held accountable. That's still my view.

"To me, the important thing is that something was identified here as wrong, as not right," the governor continued, "and that there will be a full investigation and that there should be accountability and justice for Sandra Birchmore's family. It's a terrible situation."

As a 12-year-old in March 2010, Birchmore applied to participate in the Police Explorers Academy, a youth program run by the SPD for which Farwell taught. She stayed in the program for about four years.

Court documents allege that Farwell worked to groom Birchmore early on, pretending to befriend the girl 12 years his junior by doing test prep with her at the library and friending her on Facebook. He began a sexual relationship with her when she was 15 and he was 27, taking her virginity, something he seems to be quite proud of based on messages uncovered during the lengthy federal investigation.

Birchmore learned she was pregnant in late December 2020, about a month before she would die.

The Birchmore and Read cases are just a couple of scandals engulfing the commonwealth's premier law enforcement agency that Geoffrey Noble is set to take over as colonel of in October.

Healey announced earlier this week that she tapped Noble, the current lieutenant colonel of the New Jersey State Police, as the next leader of the MSP.

Noble is set to take over an agency that boasts more than 3,000 sworn and civilian personnel and a \$500 million operating budget. John Mawn has served as interim colonel since February 2023, following the retirement of Colonel Christopher Mason.

"I'm hoping the colonel will be able to hire a few people to come in and help him," Eagan told Healey on WGBH's set at Boston Public Library, "because he's coming in from New Jersey to a state police that has had a lot of difficulty over time, people getting arrested ... there's been a lot of scandals."

Healey responded that Mawn has set the tone for a smooth transition, asking for “not just cooperation but collaboration” when Noble takes over.

“Col. Noble will be empowered to bring in the people he sees fit,” Healey said. “Anyone coming into that role is very mindful as a leader that the morale of the team is very important to make sure you’re working to build that chemistry and create that positive, constructive atmosphere.

“I have every confidence that he will do that,” she added, “and I have every confidence that the men and women in the state police will rise to the moment.

2024 > September > 6

NEWS > CRIME & PUBLIC SAFETY

Should Sandra Birchmore's alleged murderer also be charged with killing her unborn baby?



Photo By Matt Stone/Boston Herald

Acting U.S. Attorney Joshua Levy, right, and Assistant Special Agent in Charge Stephen Kelleher of the Boston FBI hold a press conference after the arrest of former Stoughton Police Officer Matthew Farwell, charged for the death of Sandra Birchmore. (Photo By Matt Stone/Boston Herald)



The gruesome details of the [murder of Sandra Birchmore](#), allegedly at the hands of [a former Stoughton cop](#) who had impregnated her, have some [calling](#) for an additional charge for the killing of the unborn baby.

“It is hard to imagine a more clear-cut case for enforcing federal law for protecting unborn children than this one,” Roger Severino, the vice president of domestic policy at the Heritage Foundation, told the Herald, “when the very existence of the unborn child was the very evidence against this monster.”

Former Stoughton Police Detective [Matthew Farwell](#) is accused of murdering 23-year-old Birchmore in her Canton apartment not too long after she had excitedly revealed to him that she was pregnant with their child by texting him a photograph of a handmade card saying, “[Congrats, we are going to be parents!](#)”

Farwell, 38, of North Easton, is accused of entering Birchmore’s Canton apartment on Feb. 1, 2021, and strangling her to death as he knew she was weeks pregnant. Prosecutors say he then staged the apartment to make it look like Birchmore had committed suicide.

She was roughly two months pregnant.

By that point, Farwell had known Birchmore for almost 11 years. Birchmore at 12 years old joined the Police Explorers Academy, a youth program run by the SPD for which Farwell taught. Prosecutors say Farwell first groomed the girl and then took her virginity when she was 15.

The married man 12 years Birchmore’s senior, who had three children with his wife, maintained a sexual relationship with the young woman, court documents allege, until her death.

The charges

The feds [charged Farwell](#) with killing a victim or witness to a federal crime, as they hung his illicit actions on ripping off his employer for having sexual rendezvous while on the clock.

To some outside observers, there is a missing element in the charges against the allegedly crooked cop: the unborn baby that by all accounts Birchmore was very excited to have. As the pregnancy appears to be the inciting action that led to the murder itself, some could see the unborn as the actual intended victim in the case.

In a [press conference](#) last month announcing the indictment, both acting U.S. Attorney Joshua Levy and a representative of the Boston FBI, Assistant Special Agent in Charge Steve Kelleher, emphasized the unborn baby in their telling of the story.

“Matthew Farwell’s gun and badge [did not grant him authority](#) to violate the Constitution and certainly didn’t entitle him to sexually exploit, abuse and rape a child before killing her and her unborn baby in an attempt to cover up his alleged crime,” Kelleher said.

Levy stated the impetus for the alleged crime: “Ms. Birchmore was very excited about becoming a mother: buying baby clothes and other items, taking precautions to ensure the health of her new child. ... But Mr. Farwell did not share in that excitement. It’s alleged Mr. Farwell reacted quite negatively to the news that Sandra Birchmore was pregnant with his child and he acted angrily.”

The Unborn Victims of Violence Act

The [Unborn Victims of Violence Act](#), which is also known as “Laci and Conner’s Law” from the contemporary case of Laci Peterson and her unborn child’s murder at the hands of husband and father Scott Peterson, was [signed into law](#) by President George W. Bush in 2004.

The law, according to the [Congressional record summary](#), “Provides that persons who commit certain Federal violent crimes ... and thereby cause the death of, or bodily injury to, a child who is in utero shall be guilty of a separate offense. Requires the punishment for that separate offense to be the same as provided under Federal law for that conduct had that injury or death occurred to the unborn child’s mother.”

Some activists are pushing for this law to be applied to Farwell.

Colbe Mazzarella, an attorney and president of the Pro-Life Legal Defense Fund, told the Herald, “I call on Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy to charge Officer Matthew Farwell under 18 U.S.C. Section 1841.”

Mazzarella added: “The accusation that a police officer killed his former student and their unborn baby strikes horror in every feeling heart. Such monumental selfishness was the reason for the federal Unborn Victims of Violence Act. This law was passed by Republicans and Democrats to punish and prevent many abusers who kill pregnant women or use violence to force a woman to abort their child.”

The Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America group is also pushing for the charge.

“It is plain that there are two victims in this terrible crime, a young woman and her unborn baby. The federal Unborn Victims of Violence Act was enacted to ensure justice for both victims in crimes like this,” Autumn Christensen, the group’s vice president of public policy, told the Herald.

“It is even more relevant when the unborn child themselves may have been the ‘evidence’ the accused hoped to dispose of in their crime. The federal prosecutors in this case should seek every opportunity to obtain justice for Sandra and her baby,” she added.

The law has not been particularly popular among more left-leaning legal analysts who have argued that, despite the law’s carve-out to allow for self-determined abortion, its application could endanger a woman’s ability to make her own abortion decisions.

The American Civil Liberties Union, for one, opposed the bill and wrote during its legislative development that it would be the “first federal law to recognize a zygote (fertilized egg), a blastocyst (pre-implantation embryo), an embryo (through week 8 of a pregnancy), or a fetus as an independent ‘victim’ of a crime, with legal rights distinct from the woman who has been harmed.”

The ACLU said it “fully supports efforts to punish acts of violence against women that harm or terminate a wanted pregnancy.” But the bill, the non-profit added, “is an inappropriate method of imposing such punishment, however, because it dangerously seeks to separate the woman from her fetus in the eyes of the law. Such separation is merely the first step toward eroding a woman’s right to determine the fate of her own pregnancy and to direct the course of her own health care.”

In Birchmore's case, every indication was that she wanted to have her child. In fact, investigators and prosecutors used the apparent excitement for the child's upcoming birth as key indicators that Birchmore had no intention of committing suicide, as Farwell is alleged to have staged the scene of her death to suggest.

The FBI's Kelleher said, "Our investigation also uncovered additional evidence that is inconsistent with someone choosing to die by suicide. In the hours leading up to Sandra's death, she reached out to a photographer to inquire about booking a newborn photo shoot. She also reached out to a friend about obtaining baby clothes."

Adding the charge

Levy left the door open for additional charges, either from his own office or from the local and state agencies with whom the feds shared their investigative output on the case.

"We're going to continue to look through this matter and if there's other individuals that we develop evidence that they've violated the federal law, we'll proceed," he said at the press conference. He added, "That is our duty to the public, to pursue credible leads like that and investigate them fully."

A spokeswoman for Levy's office has since told the Herald, "We don't comment on charging decisions." Developments to the charges, if any, will likely be unknown outside of updates to the public docket.

To apply the Unborn Victims of Violence Act to the Farwell case would be both a matter of prosecutorial procedure and act of political will, the Heritage Foundation's Severino told the Herald.

In a vacuum, prosecutors can take the case back to the grand jury stage, allege the new charge, and return a superseding indictment with the extra charge added, said Severino, who worked for years as a trial attorney in the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division.

But in the real world, he added, such things are not so simple.

"It will take political pressure for them to charge what they should have done from the very beginning," Severino said. "Under the current administration, there isn't a snowball's chance that they would support an Unborn Victims of Violence Act charge given their radical pro-abortion policies."

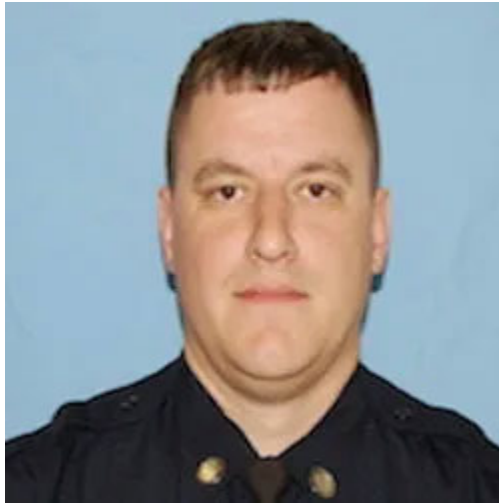
Politics and justice hang in the balance. Defendants have a right to a speedy trial and too long a delay to that trial, Severino said, could be a violation of Farwell's due process rights.

"Did not the baby have value?" Tom Harvey, a Massachusetts attorney with the Pro-Life Legal Defense Fund, told the Herald. "A bipartisan bill passed by Congress shows that, under the law, that baby's life had value. And Sandra Birchmore sure seemed to think so. There were two deaths here and the perpetrator should be charged accordingly."

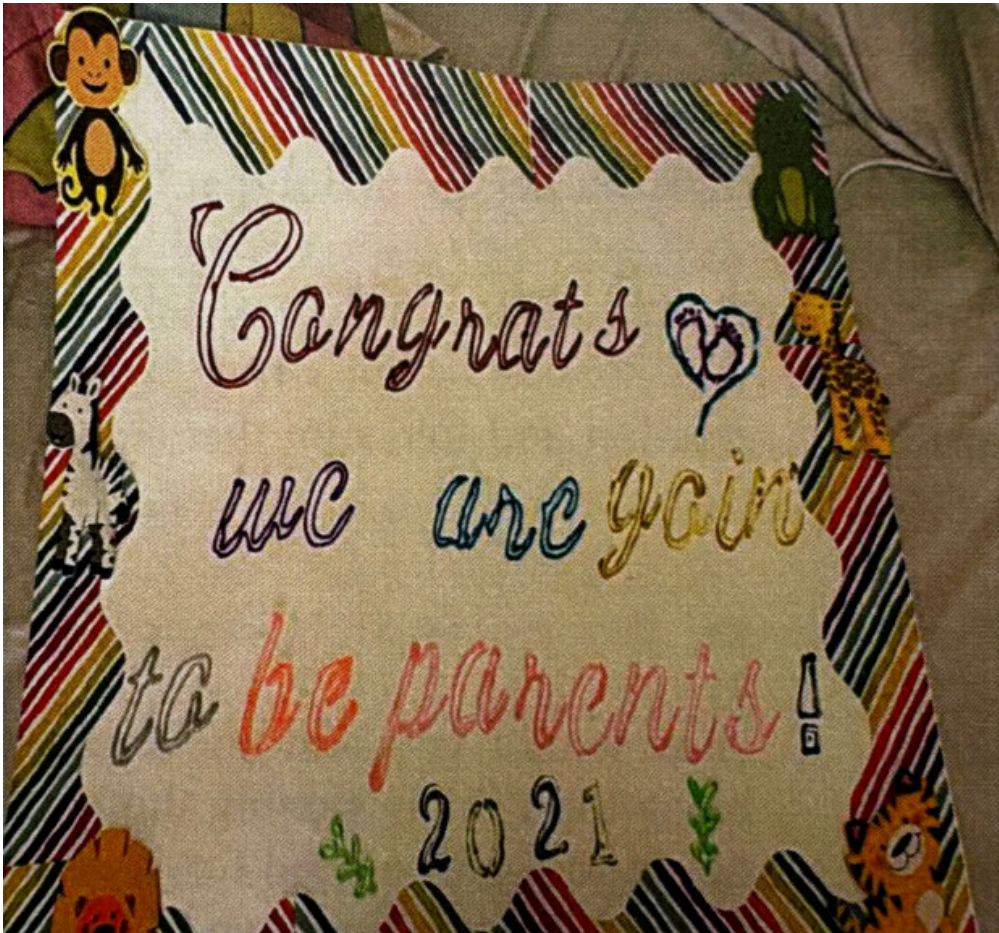


Sandra Birchmore (Herald file)

Courtesy



Stoughton Police Department via AP
Matthew Farwell (Stoughton Police Department via AP)



Courtesy/U.S. District Court
The card investigators say Sandra Birchmore wrote and sent in a text to Stoughton Police Officer Matthew Farwell in December 2020. (Courtesy/U.S. District Court)



AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais

President George W. Bush signs the Unborn Victims of Violence Act of 2004 during a ceremony in the East Room of the White House on April 1, 2004 in Washington. (AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais)



AP Photo/Paul Sakuma

The adorned truck of San Diego's Ronald Brock, parked outside a Redwood City, Calif. courthouse on June 1, 2004, for the Scott Peterson trial, illustrates the debate that raged at the time over whether the killing of an unborn baby should constitute a separate charge. (AP Photo/Paul Sakuma)

OPINION > EDITORIALS

Editorial: Speak loudly for the unborn





By **BOSTON HERALD EDITORIAL STAFF**

PUBLISHED: September 18, 2024 at 5:56 AM EDT | UPDATED: September 18, 2024 at 5:57 AM EDT

The [Unborn Victims of Violence Act of 2004](#) is a three-page law that defends those who cannot speak for themselves.

Unborn babies are too often dismissed as not human yet, but that's not the case in this law.

The simplicity of the language is the beauty of this act. This passage alone says it all: "The term 'unborn child' means a child in utero ... a member of the species homo sapiens, at any stage of development, who is carried in the womb."

No days, weeks, months are counted. It's clear that if a killer knowingly or unknowingly murders or injures an unborn child he or she can be charged with the same crime as the murder or assault of the mother. Yes, the law states "pregnant woman," no birthing people are mentioned.

It must be this direct. There can be no equivocation. A life taken at any stage of development — outside of the abortion process, the law stresses — can trigger a murder charge. Roe vs. Wade was still the law of the land in 2004, so what happens next is up to each state, based on our reading of the 2022 U.S. [Supreme Court Dobbs vs. Jackson](#) ruling. In Massachusetts, the unborn victims' law stands as written because abortion is still on the books here.

"Whoever engages in conduct that violates any of the provisions of law listed ... and thereby causes the death of, or bodily injury to, a child, who is in utero at the time the conduct takes place, is guilty of a separate offense under this section," the first line of the act states.

As the [Herald reported Sunday](#), this law could apply to the murder of Sandra Birchmore and her unborn child, allegedly at the hands of a former Stoughton cop who had impregnated her.

The U.S. Attorney's Office in Boston had the courage — and smarts — to bring murder charges against the defendant in this case when the Norfolk DA's office failed to do so. But, why not add the Unborn Victims of Violence Act to the tally of alleged crimes?

“It is hard to imagine a more clear-cut case for enforcing federal law for protecting unborn children than this one,” Roger Severino, the vice president of domestic policy at the Heritage Foundation, told the Herald, “when the very existence of the unborn child was the very evidence against this monster.”

Former Stoughton Police Detective Matthew Farwell is accused of murdering 23-year-old Birchmore in her Canton apartment not too long after she had excitedly revealed to him that she was pregnant with their child by texting him a photograph of a handmade card saying, “Congrats, we are going to be parents!”

Farwell, 38, of North Easton, is accused of entering Birchmore's Canton apartment on Feb. 1, 2021, and strangling her to death as he knew she was weeks pregnant. Prosecutors say he then staged the apartment to make it look like Birchmore had committed suicide.

She was roughly two months pregnant.

We urge the U.S. Attorney's office to keep probing and keep in mind the unborn child who will never learn to walk, giggle, play in the park, or be soothed, loved, and nurtured into adulthood.

Add to the list of heinous crimes the death of this unborn child by giving voice to yet another victim of domestic cruelty. Use the Unborn Victims of Violence Act of 2004 to show everyone life matters — no matter the age of the victim.

NEWS > CRIME & PUBLIC SAFETY

Hearing for accused Sandra Birchmore killer delayed due to 'voluminous' evidence





By **FLINT MCCOLGAN** | flint.mccolgan@bostonherald.com

PUBLISHED: October 15, 2024 at 2:34 PM EDT | UPDATED: October 15, 2024 at 6:28 PM EDT

The former Stoughton cop accused of [killing Sandra Birchmore](#), a young woman [carrying his child](#), will not be in court this week for a scheduled hearing — as lawyers say there is a “voluminous” amount of evidence to review before the next meeting.

“The government has produced voluminous discovery that, in its view, goes beyond its obligations under the federal and local rules,” a joint memo indicating the status of the case states. “The government is continuing to review additional discovery and will produce those materials on a rolling basis.”

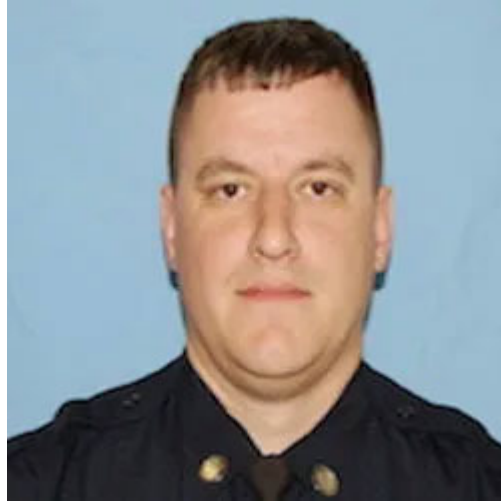
Based on the additional time requested, U.S. District Court Magistrate Judge M. Page Kelley canceled a status conference in the case of Matthew Farwell scheduled for Thursday in federal court in Boston. The next scheduled date is now Dec. 3 at noon.

Matthew Farwell, 38, of North Easton, is accused of strangling to death Birchmore, 23, in her Canton apartment on Feb. 1, 2021, and staging the scene to look like a suicide. He did this, prosecutors allege, after learning she had become pregnant with his child.

Farwell had known Birchmore for almost 11 years. Birchmore, at 12-years-old, joined the Police Explorers Academy, a youth program run by the SPD for which Farwell taught. Prosecutors say Farwell first groomed the girl and then took her virginity when she was 15.

Prosecutors say they made two major rollouts of evidence — known as “discovery” — on Sept. 24, Sept. 25 and Oct. 1. The defense has not produced any discovery yet, but has requested information regarding “the filter protocol and search of certain electronic devices ... that contain privileged information.”

Farwell's brother, William Farwell, a fellow Stoughton Police officer, was also [decertified as a police officer](#) last month. He agreed to the decision by the state's POST Commission, noting strong evidence of wrongdoing, also involving a relationship with Birchmore, against him.



Stoughton Police Department via AP
Matthew Farwell (Stoughton Police Department via AP)

2024 > October > 15

NEWS > CRIME & PUBLIC SAFETY

Sandra Birchmore's alleged killer won't show up for arraignment for slaying unborn baby





By **FLINT MCCOLGAN** | flint.mccolgan@bostonherald.com

PUBLISHED: November 7, 2025 at 3:56 PM EST

The Stoughton cop accused of grooming Sandra Birchmore as a minor and then killing her when she was an adult will not be present at his arraignment on a [new charge](#) of killing their unborn child.

Matthew Farwell, 39, of North Easton, was originally indicted in federal court in Boston in August 2024 with killing a witness or victim in the death of Birchmore, who he had [maintained a sexual relationship](#) with for seven years. On Feb. 1, 2021, she was found dead in an apparent suicide in her Canton apartment at age 23. Federal investigators say Farwell just staged the scene to look like a suicide but had actually slayed the woman after she shared that she was pregnant.

At the end of last month, federal prosecutors took the death of the unborn baby — who Birchmore had strongly indicated [she was excited to have](#), according to court documents — into account and charged Farwell with a charge called [“Protection of unborn child,”](#) which allows for the same penalties as the first charge for killing the child in utero. Prosecutors say the child’s gestational age was between eight and 10 weeks at the time of the killing.

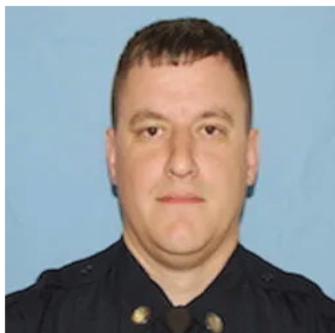
Farwell will not be present for his arraignment on the new charge. His attorneys filed a waiver of appearance, which Magistrate Judge M. Page Kelley accepted. Farwell’s arraignment is scheduled for Nov. 21 at 11 a.m.

While Massachusetts is not a death penalty state, federal law allows for the death penalty, which prosecutors may take up in this case.

Birchmore was born in 1997, and in March 2010, at the age of 12, she applied to participate in the Police Explorers Academy, a youth program that Farwell ran for the Stoughton Police Department. She stayed in the program for about four years.

Prosecutors allege that Farwell worked to groom Birchmore early on, pretending to befriend the girl 12 years his junior by doing test prep with her at the library and friending her on Facebook. He began a sexual relationship with her when she was 15 and he was 27.

“Matthew Farwell’s gun and badge did not grant him authority to violate the Constitution and certainly didn’t entitle him to sexually exploit, abuse and rape a child before killing her and her unborn baby in an attempt to cover up his alleged crime,” Boston FBI Assistant Special Agent in Charge Steve Kelleher said during a press conference announcing the initial charges.



Stoughton Police Department
via AP
Matthew Farwell
(Stoughton Police
Department via AP)



Courtesy/U.S. District Court
The card investigators say Sandra Birchmore wrote and sent in a text to Stoughton Police Officer Matthew Farwell in December 2020.
(Courtesy/U.S. District Court)

HOUSE PARTY Pats prep for home opener



MATT STONE - BOSTON HERALD

LIFE FOR A LIFE



**Unborn victims of Violence Act not used
in Birchmore murder case. Why not?**